

EDITORIALS

Growing Maine from within

Contrary to the impression one might get from campaign rhetoric, politicians do not create jobs. What they can do, however, is advocate policies to support a healthy economic environment so that businesses are in a position to create jobs.

More than 97 percent of all Maine businesses are small, and they employ 61 percent of all Maine workers. In fact, the majority of the new jobs in Maine are being created by small businesses.

With these things in mind, Maine House Democrats are on a quest to do a better job of supporting small business development in our state. They have drafted an action plan as well as the Maine Small Business Bill of Rights and have just completed a series of regional forums to obtain input on these documents from entrepreneurs around the state.

There is still time for small business owners and would-be owners to participate in the dialogue. The more feedback during the process, the better the outcome. Just visit this Internet Web site: www.maine-housedems.org/business/survey1.htm. Read the action plan and Bill of Rights, then complete the survey.

A lot of good ideas are surfacing that could be implemented with little or no cost, which should please Republican lawmakers in Augusta. Containing costs, reducing paperwork and simplifying the regulatory process could realign existing state resources, thereby funding the creation of a Small Business Advocate within state government. A one-stop information source and a "3-1-1" statewide business assistance line also would be invaluable to new and developing small businesses.

House Democrats plan to draft legislation by December that will move forward at least some of the actions that can be taken to improve the climate for small business and help to grow Maine from within.